

critical digest



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This Week in NYC

The Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre and Company were firmly established. The NYC Planning Commission approved the \$7 1/2 million grant for the Library-Museum building housing the 1100 seat Vivian Beaumont Theatre (named to honor \$3 million donor Mrs Vivian Beaumont Allen,) the 299 seat experimental Forum playhouse, and the rooftop NY Public Library Theatre and Music Collections. Actual ground breaking took place at the 65th St and Amsterdam Ave site, cement construction will start in Jan, with completion set for Sept 1963. A \$500,000 grant from Lincoln Center's "Fund for Education and Artistic Advancement" was made to cover the seven month training and rehearsal period of the 35 member repertory company under Elia Kazan's direction, starting Feb 1963. The troupe will work at an undisclosed out-of-town spot.

The first two productions under Kazan's direction will open in Fall 1963, with a third by another director in early 1964. Four to five productions will be presented yearly in repertory, each for a minimum of 36 subscription performances during the 33 week season Oct to May.

The first repertory company will be signed for 2 1/2 years and will consist of a dozen well-established "name" players, a dozen with some Broadway experience, and some young newcomers. Kazan and producing director Robert Whitehead will soon make a national tour surveying possible talent for the latter group.

Ticket prices will be \$5-\$4-\$3-\$2, and the theatre can break even at 100% capacity year-round. The Forum will present unusual plays and productions without sets by actors and directors not connected with the repertory operation. It will also showcase six outstanding American theatre groups during the regular season. In summer the larger theatre will present top world theatre companies, while the smaller will present the best of the world's avant garde theatres.

NYC Calendar

'Toinette- Theatre Marquee- (110 E 59) 11/20. Bickerstaff Productions presents musical based on Moliere's "La Malade Imaginaire" Music & lyrics by Deed Myer, book by J L Rodale, directed by Curt Conway with Ellie Wood, Logan Ramsey.

Androcles and the Lion and The Policeman -East 74th St(334 E 74)- 11/21. Phoenix Theatre presents third subscription program of season. Twin bill of Shaw revival directed by Tom Gruenwald with Dana Elcar, Pat Falkenhain and modern Polish play by Slawomir Mrozek, directed and co-produced by Leonidas D-Ossetynsky with Jack Gilford, Lionel Stander.

Back to Back-Midway(420 W 42) 11/21. Rose Lynch presents twin bill of John Mortimer's short plays "What Shall We Tell Caroline" and "The Dock Brief", directed by Steve Chernak. Postponed from 11/14.

A Man for All Seasons-ANTA -11/22. Robert Whitehead-Roger Stevens presents British play by Robert Bolt, staged by Noel Williams with Paul Scofield, Leo McKern, George Rose.

Plays

Shows that closed include-- A Cook for Mr. General after 28 and Kwamina after 32 performances... A Family Affair to open Jan 22 at Billy Rose Theatre, No Strings Mar 1 at Hellinger... Rich and Famous by Jay Presson to star Anne Bancroft in Mar, directed by Arthur Penn, produced by Lewis Allen.

Players

Bernie West subbing for Phil Silvers, Do Re Mi, who has infection on right foot...Iva Withers to sub for vacationing Tammy Grimes, Unsinkable Molly Brown Nov 27 week... Paul Richards replaced ill Steven Hill, A Far Country, for final week and tour... Nancy Kelly and Claude Dauphin to co-star in A Passage to India.

Off Broadway

Shows that closed include-- Sharon's Grave after 6, O Marry Me after 21, Clandestine on the Morning Line after 24 and Sap of Life after 49 performances... The Balcony to close Dec 10 at Circle with Thornton Wilder's triple bill Plays for Bleeker St to play nightly starting Dec 18... Ted van Griethuysen joined Red Roses for Me which postponed debut to Nov 27... Shepperd Strudwick replaced Staats Cotsworth, Ghosts... The Vagabond King revival by American Savoyards opens two week-end run Nov 23 at Jan Hus House... Strollers Theatre Club to change program bi-weekly.

Three new shows picked Dec 18 opening date: All Kinds of Giants musical by Sam Pottle and Tom Whedon at Cricket, directed by Peter Conlow with Maureen Bailey, who is leaving The Sound of Music... Signs Along the Cynic Route revue at Actors Playhouse with cast of four... Hawkshaw a 19th century melodrama by Tom Taylor directed by Robert Moore.

Broadway Business

Variety reports slight improvement after very poor week. Of newcomers Gideon joined sellout list of eight, but Kean didn't.

Drama Desk

Robert Lewis, director, replaced Joseph Shipley, New Leader, who will continue first night radio reviews on WEVD (NYC).

Theatre Film Notes

Julius Caesar to be filmed in Italy with Cameron Mitchell to be produced by Amerigo Antone... Shirley MacLaine to star in A Shot in the Dark film.

Theatre Magazine Notes

"Esquire" to publish Gideon, Night of the Iguana and Romulus in forthcoming issues this season.

DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

Gideon-Plymouth 11/9. 6 pro- and 1 con- Herald Tribune-filed on new play by Paddy Chayefsky, staged by Tyrone Guthrie, presented by Fred Coe & Arthur Cantor with Fred-eric March, Douglas Campbell, Eric Berry, Mark Lenard. The affirmative voters applauded humorous, devout, moving script, the two beautiful leading performances, the imaginative direction. Several voiced minor criticisms on the second act and the David Hays set. Single con vote was mostly against lack of character development in the script. Pro side headed by Taubman, Times, who loved the graceful conceit tinged with innocent wonder and wise laughter, though he did not think the canted set of much help. Chapman, News, raved about the inexplicably hypnotic drama, the beautiful leading performances and staging. Coleman, Mirror, found it a powerful, often humorous play, thoughtful, intelligent and stirring. McClain, Journal American, raved about the enormous, powerful, humorous play with its two towering performances, a play of exceptional warmth, wit and dimension. Watts, Post, okayed beautifully acted, powerful, provocative play, though he felt second act plunged author beyond his depth. Nadel, World Telegram & Sun, also recommended production as fascinating theatre, a play to excite the mind and challenge the spirit, though he suggested improvised ending did not rise to the stature of the story that inspired it. Single dissenter Kerr, Herald Tribune, feared the miracle lacking in the production was that of the author's inability to transform the probing and prolonged philosophical discussion into a moving theatrical experience. He repeated his original, amusing scene instead of developing it. Kerr also complained that Guthrie pitched the voice level of his cast too high.

All in Love- Martinque Theatre (32nd & Broadway) 11/10. 2 pro- Times, Post- and 3 con- Herald Tribune, Mirror, Journal American- filed on musical based on Sheridan's "The Rivals" with book and lyrics by Bruce Geller, music by Jacques Urbont, staged by Tom Brennan, present by Geller-Urbont and Stella Holt with David Atkinson, Galea Byrne. Dom De Luise. The pros were both raves, while the cons blamed book in otherwise handsome production. All complimented costumes and sets by Charles Lisandy. Rave notice from Esterow, Times, shared plaudits with book, lyrics, music, cast, set, director in the delightful musical comedy. Herridge, Post, also raved about the remarkably stylish musical with witty book and lyrics, catchy and creative music and excellent cast all playing tongue in cheek. Con voter Morgenstern, Herald Tribune, liked four of the songs and the cast, but believed the production was overdressed and underdramatized, with characterization sacrificed to postering. Coleman, Mirror, admitted opening night audience loved it, but he was forced to rate it as a bright, knowing and above average varsity show. He would have rather had the original Sheridan play than this musical version. McClain, Journal American, marked the book very much a muddle suffering from an acute case of the "cutes."

Brecht on Brecht-De Lys 11/14 & 11/20. 3 pro - Times, Post, World Telegram & Sun- filed on first Greater ANTA Chapter Matinee series featuring readings of Brecht plays and a performance of The Jewish Wife staged by Gene Frankel with Viveca Lindfors, George Voskovec. Because of the demand a second performance is scheduled for Nov 20 evening at De Lys, also a benefit for ANTA. Calta, Times, recommended performance which presented wide facade of many parts and much mortar of Brecht. Herridge, Post, approved of notable group of actors who created a vivid portrait of the author via songs, poems, memories, stories and observations. Nadel, WTS, also raved over the unusual afternoon performance. Brecht's words pinpoint much that is wrong with the ordinary way of putting on a play, Nadel concluded. George Gaines, Dolly Haas, Anne Jackson, Lotte Lenya and Eli Wallach participated in the first half.

The Automobile Graveyard-41st St (125 W 41)-11/13 1 pro- World Telegram & Sun- and 6 con- filed on French play by Spanish writer Arrabal, translated by Richard Howard, presented by Gian Sciandra, directed by Herbert Machiz with Lella Martin, Gabriel Dell, Jimmy Gavin, Estelle Parsons. The only pro was for the writing, direction and acting in unusual avant garde play. The majority panned script as meaningless and three critics felt sorry for the trapped cast. But Nadel, WTS, believes the strange, grotesque parable merits attention, it captures and holds attention from the start, its religious symbolism can't be misunderstood, and the cast gives it all the depth that's due it. Play might even be habit-forming, critic admits. Taubman, Times, panned it as a far-rago of disconnected nonsense, the means used so baffling that the wildest and most mysterious avant gardists seem by comparison sedate and transparently clear. Kerr, Herald Tribune, summed up his feelings in his lead in which he stated that if his readers have absolutely nothing else to do they should stay home. Davis, News, labeled it 100% junk, a disjointed hodge-podge, though he okayed Martin's performance. Watts, Post, is sure this is the definitive "non-play", obvious but neither dramatic nor interesting. McClain, Journal American, settled for pretentious twaddle as his description of the weird play.

Utopia, Limited- Jan Hus- 11/8-12. Saffron, World Telegram & Sun, okayed seldom seen Gilbert & Sullivan operatta presented by American Savoyards for two week-end performances. Though not up to top G & S form it has a refreshingly unsentimental love story and a most thorough lancing of Britain's social and economic system. The bright new production teems with quiet fun.

NYC

FUTURE

CALENDAR



Red Roses for Me- G Mews-11/27... Sunday in NY- Cort- 11/29... The Apple- Living -11/29... Daughter of Silence- Music Box- 11/30... Shadow of Heroes-York-12/5... Sing Muse!- Van Dam 12/6... The Hostage- 1 Sher Sq- 12/12... Poppa Is Home-Gate- 12/12... First Love-Morosco 12/13... Fortuna- 12/14... Plays for Bleecker St- Circle 12/18... Signs Along Cynic Route- Actors Play 12/18... All Kinds of Giants- Cricket-12/18... Hawkshaw- 12/18... Not While I'M Eating- Mad Av 12/19... Take Her, She'S Mine- Biltmore- 12/21... Subways Are for Sleeping- 12/26... Ross- 12/26... Madame Aphrodite-Orpheum 12/27... Night of the Iguana- Royale 12/28... Funny Thing Happened on Way to Forum- 12/28... This Was Burlesque- Phoenix 12/?

World Next Door- 1/3... Something About a Soldier- 1/4... Mort Sahl at 9 O Clock-Golden 1/6... Romulus- 1/9... Giants, Son of Giants- 1/11... Absence of a Cello- 1/18... Captains & Kings- 1/22... Passage to India- 1/31

New Faces of '62- 2/1... A Family Affair- 2/3... The Umbrella- 2/5... Old Vic- 2/5... All American- 2/21... Jennie- 2/28... Isle of Children- 2/28.

No Strings- Hellinger 3/1... We Take the Town 3/15... Come on Strong 4/4... Queen & Rebels- 4/16... Happy, Happy, Happy 5/3



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT



PROS & CONS BY TMK

LINCOLN REPERTORY... With Robert Whitehead and Elia Kazan literally running the show the Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre is assured of a professional and imaginative direction, saluted Herald Tribune editorial. It will be a distinct addition to the city's facilities for worthwhile entertainment with an exciting potential...Times editorial urged removal of Columbus statue from Columbus Circle as essential to a revolutionary overhaul of the traffic program in the Lincoln Center area. Paper hopes final plans are ready when needed, not years afterward.

REVIEWERS AT WORK... The almost staggering unimportance of the NY critics, at least where musicals are concerned, was illustrated in the case of Kean, points out McClain, Journal American... Second night reviewers contention that they never read the reports of the first night team marked as a high point of snobbery by Winchell, Mirror... First night critics at work ordered only two glasses of white wine, one tea and one daiquiri when offered their choice of full bottles at Time Gentlemen Please debut, surveys Variety.

FINANCIAL REPORTS... Despite the additional 5% off the top obtained by producers through the repeal of the NYC admission tax, the price of show tickets is edging up again, warns Davis, News. The \$8.60 seats are now \$8.80, The \$9.40 are \$9.60... Strollers Theatre Club isn't inexpensive, but its fun, rates McHarry, News. Dinner before the show is \$6.50 and tickets to Time Gentlemen Please are \$4.60. Critic didn't think much of the Yorkshire pudding, but the beef and the revue are excellent.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... After re-reading Thurber's "The Pleasure Cruise, and How to Survive It" Nadel, World Telegram & Sun, believes that Thurber, not Noel Coward, should have written Sail Away... Chapman, News, agrees with Taubman, Times, that the season so far has had a considerable dose of sex deviation. He is also weary of looking at bare-chested chorus boys who perform and look like so many chimpanzees in the Broadway jungles... From the Second City recommended by Slocum, Mirror, the next time you discover your artistic-type producer copped his bets and sold out to a benefit... Ticket broker Louis Schonzeit, Mackey's, would like producers to limit their sales to benefits to four performances per week (Mon, Tues, Thurs eve and Wed matinee), he told Zolotow, Times.

SECOND GUESSES... Write Me A Murder Sun follow-up articles were divided. Chapman, News, enjoyed good quiet thriller as far as it went. Watts, Post, thought, all the relish and excitement of a promising idea dwindled away.

EVERYBODY'S A CRITIC... "Management reserves the right to refuse entrance to anyone not properly dressed. Equity urges management to ask anyone to leave for reasons of bad behavior" is statement printed on Actors Equity passes to Broadway plays provided by the producers, reports Little, Herald Tribune.

Gideon is a spectacle of a sermon mounted on a near cliff (a 45 degree slanted stage) played with enthusiasm in a doomed attempt to bring theatrical vividness to what is essentially a sit-down philosophical conversation between two brilliant, charming character actors. The inventive director, never stymied by a lack of character development and/or meaningful action, moves his leading players and supporting troops up and down the mountainside in always intriguing fashion. But the end result is still an elongated illustrated sermon with built in subtitles. The dialogue adaptation of the Biblical miracle tale is sometimes humorous, for a few moments terrifying, but never completely convincing in either dramatic and/or debate terms. The reverent who were enthralled by J.B. as moving religious drama will also applaud the new production for the same reasons. For those who demand more theatre in their theatre will simply be bored after the introduction of the two main characters is completed.

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The Automobile Graveyard is a wild, grotesque avant garde playlet that succeeds in getting through to only one cast member. A beat-jazz parable with often crystal clear symbolism mixed liberally with clouded mysticism presents Leila Martin as the sole actor who is convinced that the French play is worth the effort. She is quite fascinating in her acting, singing, dancing role, whatever it may mean. The remainder of the cast have adopted loud voices and vacant stares as standard equipment in place of comprehension. They seem just as bewildered as most of the audience. The imaginative direction, the highly original set and the very interesting script are wasted on both cast and audience.

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Sharon's Grave was a thrilling, though brief, introduction for American audiences to an exciting new Irish playwright. John B. Keane's modern Irish ghost fantasy was a beautifully written play given a very uneven production by the Irish Players, much below their usual high standards. Exactly half of the cast, and especially Helena Carroll, were excellent. The other half presented the unusual story more like a slapstick farce than a drama in the solid tradition of Ireland's classic writers. The UN aside, it somehow does not seem very wise to let a Russian born, Russian trained director test her talents against this type of script. Some day with another director, with a firm hold and a long whip will present a vital revival of this interesting drama.

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The bag full of wonderful news about Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre and Company brings joy to the heads and hearts of every theatre fan in the land. Elia Kazan and Robert Whitehead have wisely been allowed to follow their own instincts of what is good theatre. As a guide book to the other theatre arts centers promised for the next decade, the NYC project can hardly be improved upon. The broad hint that the opening bill might very well be Arthur Miller's newest drama is enough to insure a subscription sellout as soon as the tickets go on sale.

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OUTER
BROADWAY
THEATRE
LETTER

Arts Centers

National Cultural Center, Washington, D.C. Board of Trustees, told by President Kennedy that he hopes in the future Washington will have a great cultural center expressing the interest of the people in this most basic desire of mankind. Such theatre and music programs now held on specially constructed stages in the White House would be held in the cultural center instead. A closed circuit TV program to 150 cities to raise \$7 to \$10 million planned as opening fund raising measure by Roger Stevens, chairman of Board.

House Select Sub-committee for Education, Rep. Frank Thompson (D-NJ) chairman held three days of public hearings at Foley Sq Federal Court House, NYC, to consider recommendations for new legislation to aid the arts. Theatre speakers included ---Joe Papp, Herman Shumlin, Peggy Wood, Hal Holbrook, Hiram Sherman, Earle Hyman, Peter Witt. T. Edward Hambleton, Jerry Tallmer, Allen Zwerdling, W. McNeil Lowry.

College Theatre

Barnard College, NYC, presented Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair...Poet's Theatre, Cambridge, Mass to present workshop productions of The Calm by Ted Hughes Nov 24-25 and The Jar by Donald Finkel Dec 8-9. The Yellow Loves by Howard Sackler will be presented Feb 1 in Loeb Drama Center, Harvard Univ.

New Playhouses

Tyrone Guthrie Playhouse, Minneapolis, Minn ground-breaking ceremony was held Nov 19. Repertory theatre will open in Spring 1963.

AETA

NY District of AETA third annual conference at Queens College, Flushing, NY elected Robert Dierlam, Queens College, president; Bernard Beckerman, Hofstra College, vice president; and Mel White, Brooklyn College, secretary-treasurer.

AET A-USO college tours this spring to play at foreign college auditoriums as well as USO centers and army bases.

Winter Repertory

Joyce Henry, NY manager, named as new General Manager of Fred Miller Theatre, Milwaukee...Coconut Grove Playhouse, Miami to open Nov 24 with Take Me Along, George C Hoover producer, Owen Phillips director.

The Music Man at Paper Mill Playhouse, Millburn, NJ with Bert Parks, Barbara Williams cheered by Nadel, World Telegram & Sun. Except for dull opening scene production is charming with all kinds of spirit, healthy continuity and strong leading performers.

Summer Playhouses

Nationwide chain of summer theatres being organized by Andred Fenady and Mark Goddard.

Legal Dept

Milford, Conn. County Court prosecutor ruled that Oct 22 Sun. performance of All My Sons at Church of Christ, Congregational did not violate state statutes. Local Citizens Anti-Communist Committee had complained.

Road Shows

Critic's Choice bus and truck tour with Jeffrey Lynn opens Dec 1 in Louisiana, produced by Hugh Fordin and Robert Herman...Sole road engagement of An Evening with Mike Nichols and Elaine May this season will be in Toronto Dec 6... Theatre Guild Speakers Bureau offering to women's clubs and charity groups--Lawrence Langer, Dore Schary and authors Ernest Kinoy, Something About a Soldier, and Santha Rama Rau, A Passage to India.

US Repertory

Federal government and foundations were urged by Helen Hayes to send more good US actors into Latin American countries to perform American plays. Actress told Schumacher, Times, that the goodwill created her her trip with Theatre Guild- American Repertory Company would be wasted and perhaps turned against us if the US never repeated. In each city she was asked when more plays would be presented.

Shakespeare

Joan Littlewood to stage Henry IV Parts I & II next season at Stratford-on-Avon.

Sweden

More Stately Mansions by Eugene O'Neill will premiere Jan 19 at Royal Dramatic Theatre, Stockholm, directed by Bengt Ekeröth. Group to present Long Day's Journey into Night in Swedish at 1962 Seattle World's Fair.

Germany

Fire to the Sea by Gore Vidal received a polite reception at Bonn debut, Eric Burger adapted Civil War play...My Fair Lady recent production by US company that played in Moscow is being seen on East German TV in a pirated tape.

Soviet

A Raisin in the Sun is currently being presented at Central Army Theatre, Moscow, without permission of author Lorraine Hansberry. Script was published last year in Russian in "Foreign Literature" magazine...95 year old actress Alexandra Yablochkina of Maly Theatre, Moscow celebrated her 70th year in theatre, Pravda reports.

Current Road Tours

Captains & Kings- Univ of Utah, Salt Lake City- 11/20

Daughter of Silence-Erlanger Philadelphia 10/30

First Love-Colonial, Boston 11/13

Night of the Iguana- Blackstone, Chicago 11/21

Subways Are for Sleeping- Shubert, Philadelphia-11/13

Sunday in New York-Walnut-Philadelphia 11/20

Advise & Consent- Fisher, Detroit 11/13

Best Man- American, St. Louis 11/20

Miracle Worker- Geary, San Francisco 11/14

"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week. "CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.



